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IT FDN 100: Lessons Learned

# Background

I entered IT FDN 100 with a solid self-taught background in simple programs. I have developed many applications at work using Visual Basic for Applications, especially with simple automation on Excel, Outlook, and PowerPoint. Before that, I had seen a number of programming languages for a brief exposure in my undergraduate studies—even Python.

With this background, I breezed through the first half of IT FDN 100. Around Week 06, I started seeing some new concepts that both piqued my interest and challenged my skills. I found particular enjoyment in learning about pickling and objects.

# General Programming Learnings

Despite having a strong self-taught background in the basic of programming, I learned a good deal in this course about software conventions and best practices. I found the discussions on pseudocode, GitHub, and PyCharm particularly helpful. Before this course, I would often rush into writing a code with no clear vision on how to achieve the desired goal. Pseudocode now helps me organize my thoughts and reach a quicker solution. GitHub and PyCharm are also useful tools for developing programs, and I have never worked with either before this course. I now know the basics and some clever ways to both save time and enhance the potential for collaboration.

# Python Learnings

While the course did a fantastic job teaching fundamental programming skills, I did pick up a few pieces of knowledge about Python specifically. Beyond the installation of Python and basic development environments (which used to be a mystic process to me), I now have a good handle on the basic syntax for functions, error handling, file I/O, and class objects. All of these can be used together to create a wide range of applications.

# Class Structure Comments

This class is well-designed for self-paced learning. I found the textbook to be extremely helpful. The video lectures, Canvas discussions, and other online resources were solid supplements, but for me, the textbook and working through the assignments were the most impactful methods for learning content. I was not able to call into any of the Zoom sessions or office hours, though I am sure those would have been helpful as well.

This was the first course where I have seen video feedback for assignments—this was fantastic. I believe video feedback offers a far more helpful response to submitted code than written feedback after going through this course.

# Next Steps

I hope to embark upon the Python certificate program through UW-Professional and Continuing Education after completing this course.